(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) Review and updation of labour laws to reduce inflexibilities in creation of new employment which is a continuous process and amendments/fresh legislations are made depending on the results of the review. A number of labour laws have been framed over a period of time to address a number of issues and problems that assumed importance and attracted pointed attention at a particular point of time. While many of these concerns are of continuing nature, some of them have ceased to be of erstwhile importance and may have indeed become obsolete and redundant. There is thus always a need to review comprehensively the labour laws so as to ensure both consistency of labour laws with the general changes taking place in the economic policy and also to provide for greater welfare of the workers. The Government have also set up the Second National Commission on Labour on 15.10.1999 which is comprehensively reviewing the labour laws and would suggest appropriate changes rationalisation of existing labour laws relating to labour in the organised sector and an umbrella legislation for ensuring a minimum level of protection to the workers in the unorganised sector.

Protection of interest of industrial workers

569. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to protect interests of the industrial workers;

(b) if so, what step are being taken to attain the aforesaid objective; and

(c) whether their interest would be kept in mind while carrying out the amendments to the Contract Labour Act and the Industrial Disputes Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) Various amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 are proposed based on the requirements of the social partners and in consonance with economic reforms.

So far as amendments in the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 are concerned, the interests of workers in terms of their welfare,

health and safety, social security and wages etc. would no doubt be taken into account while finalising the proposals.

Stringent law to prevent child labour

†570. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that highest number of child labour in the World is found in India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government propose to bring any stringent law to prevent child labour?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) According to the 1991 census data, the number of working children in the country is 11.28 million. According to some estimates, India may have the largest number of child labour population in the World.

(b) Poverty, illiteracy and lack of awareness have been identified as some of the major causes for parents sending their children for work.

(c) The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 prohibits employment of children in Occupations and Processes listed in the schedule to the Act. With a view to making the Act more stringent the Schedule has been enlarged in 1999 and 2000 to include several Occupations and Processes bringing the total number to 13 and 57 respectively. The Central Government is responsible for enforcement of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 in railways, major ports, mines, oil fields and establishments under the control of the Central Government. In all other cases, State/UT Governments are responsible for enforcement of the Act. Employers found employing children in occupations and processes prohibited under the Act are prosecuted under the provisions of the Act. State/UT Governments furnish information to the Central Government on implementation of the provisions of the Act.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.